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## Conservation

### Pledge

I give my  
pledge as an American  
to save and faithfully to  
defend from waste the  
natural resources of  
my country—its soil  
and minerals, its  
forests, waters  
and wildlife

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Enforcing boat registration and safety laws on Ouachita River on the 4th of July during the celebration there was a pleasure for wildlife agent, Frank Swayze. He had as a passenger none other than Cherie Jean Martin, "Miss Louisiana of 1965" who was crowned during the Miss Louisiana Festivities. Miss Martin is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. H. B. Martin of Pineville, Louisiana.  
(Photo by Joe L. Herring)

# LOUISIANA Conservationist

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# PASS-A-LOUTRE

Ted Joanen



Intensive research studies have revealed that delta duck potato is one of the most desirable food plants for attracting thousands of ducks to Pass-a-Loutre each winter.

**T**HE 66,000 acre Pass-a-Loutre Waterfowl Management Area, owned and operated by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, is located at the mouth of the Mississippi River and provides some of the best duck hunting in Louisiana. The public camp hunting program was started in 1954 and it is with great pride that the Commission announces the program will be made available to the public again this season.

Nine overnight camps are located throughout the central portion of the management area and gives access to some 20,000 acres of choice duck hunting country. The use of these camps is restricted to duck hunters who make applications to the Commission and are selected by drawings. Although the actual dates for the drawings and hunts have not been set in general hunting will be continued in the same fashion as last year. Morning shooting only will be allowed in the public area east of South Pass. This is done to allow the birds to return in the evening to feed and rest and to insure good hunting throughout the entire waterfowl season.

For a small nominal fee the Commission supplies boat transportation from Venice, Louisiana, to Pass-a-Loutre and return. Once at Pass-a-Loutre the hunter is provided with an overnight camp, cooking gear, butane, drinking water, beds, decoys, and duck boats, plus a two-day hunt on

some of the finest duck hunting marshes Louisiana has to offer.

In addition to the nine camps, one-third of the public shooting grounds is open on a free permit basis to hunters who wish to use their own equipment and facilities. The free permits, issued by the Commission, are valid for the entire waterfowl season. Duck hunting on this area is equally as good as the reserved camps and has been improving for the past three years.

The use of retrievers will be premitted again this year, in order to encourage their use in waterfowl hunting. This is a sound conservation measure since the crippling loss of ducks is greatly reduced.

The public hunting camps have all received preventative type maintenance when needed, also each camp is thoroughly cleaned prior to the hunting season. Hunters using the camps at Pass-a-Loutre have always been very complimentary as to their comfort and conditions.

The marshes at Pass-a-Loutre are in excellent condition. Because of its unique location the high river stages last spring flooded the lower delta and created ideal conditions for the production of desirable waterfowl food plants. One of the more important plants used by many different species of wildlife is the delta duck potato. Small tubers which form at the base of this plant serve as a modified stem and are highly utilized by

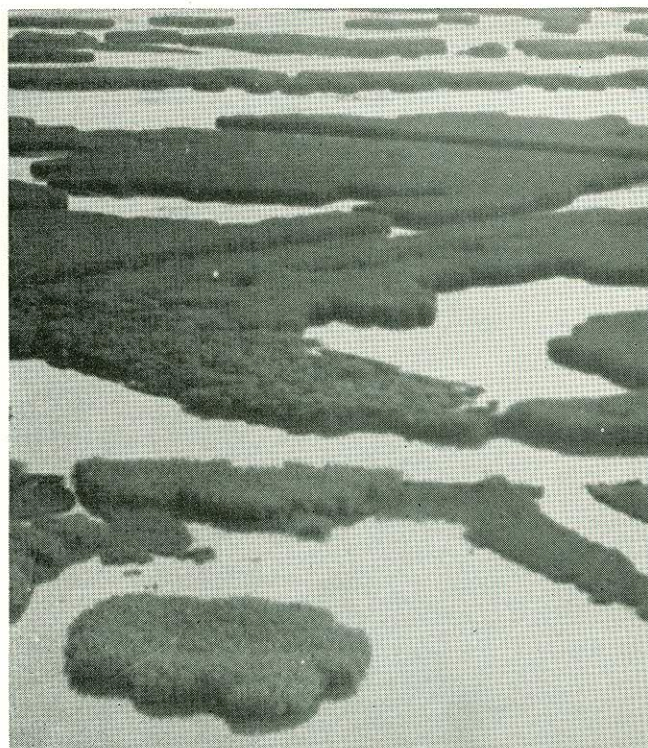


waterfowl. With the annual silting effect caused by the spring flooding the river deposits as much as 4 inches of fertile soil on Pass-a-Loutre each year. Extensive stands of delta duck potato are produced as a result of this deposition. An extensive research program was begun to study the production, utilization and value of this plant. Preliminary reports from this investigation indicate a very high utilization by nutria, duck, and geese on Pass-a-Loutre. Under experimental conditions it was found to produce over 12,000 pounds of tubers per acre.

Biologists of the Commission have collected waterfowl kill data for a number of years at the public hunting camps. A definite increase in hunter's interest was indicated during the 1963-64 waterfowl season. The information for the past two seasons gives an average kill per hunter's effort of 1.85 during the 1962-63 season which was 25 days in length and had a bag limit of only two ducks per day. During the more liberal 1963-64 season an average of 3.49 ducks per hunter's effort were bagged.

By the time this edition reaches its readers the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will have set the waterfowl season framework and the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries will have established the time of the Louisiana waterfowl season.

Application dates, drawings and hunting dates will be announced in the November-December issue of the Conservationist and by news releases to the state's newspapers, radio and television stations. ❖



Large stands of roseau cane in shallow pond areas provide ideal hunting conditions.

Afternoons at the public camps are spent cleaning the morning bag and trying to account for all the misses.

